

FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Policy Number:
261-13

Effective Date:
11/11/2016

Subject:
Traffic Direction and Control

Approved by:

Steven D. Hebbe, Chief of Police



PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines pertaining to traffic direction and control.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Farmington Police Department to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians in the City of Farmington through the use of traffic direction and control.

PROCEDURE:

Traffic Direction and Control:

Traffic direction and control functions are performed, where necessary, to ensure the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

The Department will maintain intersection control when and where necessary to direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic and to provide information to the public. The following situations may require an officer to perform traffic control:

1. The scenes of traffic accidents where the roadway is blocked or otherwise obstructed;
2. The scenes of malfunctioning traffic control devices;
3. Special events;
4. Adverse road or weather conditions;
5. Any other circumstance where manual traffic direction is warranted.

The control and direction of traffic is normally regulated by signs and signals. When these devices fail or traffic flow exceeds that amount normally expected, the manual direction of traffic becomes necessary. The major objectives of the officer directing traffic are to minimize traffic congestion problems and maintain the safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Specifically, the officer is responsible for the following:

1. Regulating the flow of traffic;
2. Control of vehicle turning movements;
3. Coordinating vehicle movements with traffic flow at adjacent intersections;
4. Detouring traffic as necessary;
5. Controlling pedestrian movements;
6. Arranging for the removal of obstructions to the traffic flow;
7. Providing clearance for emergency vehicle movements;
8. Rendering aid and assistance to motorists and pedestrians.

Manual Direction of Traffic:

All personnel authorized to direct traffic shall utilize uniform signals and gestures to enhance driver and pedestrian recognition of, and response to, their directions.

When an officer is directing traffic it is necessary that the motorists know the officer is there for that purpose.

Equipment:

1. During daylight hours, the officer will wear a reflective vest;
2. During hours of darkness, the officer shall wear a reflective vest. The officer should use a flashlight with reflective wand for increased visibility.

Positioning:

When directing traffic, officers should:

1. Position themselves so they can be seen clearly by motorists, usually in the center of an intersection or street;
2. Stand facing or with their back to traffic which they have stopped and with their side toward traffic they have directed to move.

To Stop Traffic:

1. The officer should extend their arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be stopped until the person is aware or it can reasonably be assumed that the person is aware of the officer's gesture;

2. The officer should raise their hand at the wrist so that the palm is toward the person to be stopped, and the palm is held in this position until the person is observed to stop;
3. To stop traffic from both directions on a two-way street the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction while continuing to maintain the raised arm and palm toward the traffic previously stopped.

To Start Traffic:

1. The officer should stand with shoulder and side toward the traffic to be started, extend their arm and index finger toward and look directly at the person to be started until it can be reasonably assumed they are aware of the officer's gesture;
2. With palm up, the pointing arm is moved from the elbow only, through a vertical semi-circle until the hand is adjacent to the chin. If necessary, this gesture is repeated until traffic begins to move. To start traffic from both directions on a two-way street, the procedure is then repeated for traffic coming from the other direction.

Right Turning Vehicles:

Right turning drivers usually effect their turns without the necessity of being directed by the officer. When directing a right turn becomes necessary, the officer should proceed as follows:

1. If the driver is approaching from the officer's right side, his extended right arm, index finger, and gaze are first directed toward the driver, followed by swinging the extended arm and index finger in the direction of the driver's intended turn;
2. If the driver is approaching from the officer's left side, either the same procedure may be followed utilizing the left arm extended or the extend left forearm may be raised to a vertical position from the elbow while closing the fingers so that the remaining extended thumb points in the direction of the driver's intended turn.

Left Turning Vehicles:

1. Left turning drivers should not be directed to do so while the officer is also directing oncoming traffic to proceed. The officer should direct opposing vehicles to start while avoiding left turn gestures, which will lead the driver to complete their turn only when there is a gap in the oncoming traffic. The officer could also stop or hold oncoming drivers, after which the left turning driver can be directed into his turn;
2. The officer's right side and arm should be toward the oncoming traffic, and the left side and arm should be toward the left turning driver;
3. Generally, officers will stop oncoming traffic by using the right arm and hand, the right hand should remain in the halt gesture, then the extended left arm and index finger and officer's gaze is directed toward the driver who intends to effect a left turn. When the left turning driver's attention has been gained, the extended left arm and index finger are pointed in the direction the officer intends the driver to go;

4. If the officer must clear the lane occupied by a driver who intends to make a left turn, but cannot because of oncoming traffic, the driver can be directed into the intersection and stopped adjacent to the officer's position until the left turn can be safely completed. The driver may be directed to move with one arm and hand gesture while the other arm and hand are utilized to point to the position at which the driver is to stop. After the driver is positioned within the intersection, the officer may either halt oncoming traffic and direct the completion of the turn or permit the driver to effect the turn during a natural break in the oncoming traffic.

Signaling Aids:

The whistle is used to get the attention of the driver and pedestrians and should be used judiciously. The officer will verify he has the motorist's attention through eye contact. Officers will maintain eye contact with drivers while providing manual direction of traffic. The whistle will be used as follows:

1. One long blast with STOP hand signal;
2. Two short blasts with the GO hand signal;
3. Several short blasts to get the attention of a driver or pedestrian who does not respond to a given signal.

Occasionally, a driver or pedestrian will not understand the officer's directions. When this happens, the officer should move reasonably close to the person and politely and briefly explain his directions.

A flashlight beam can be used to halt traffic. To stop traffic, slowly swing the beam of the light across the path of the oncoming traffic. The beam from the flashlight strikes the pavement as an elongated spot of light. After the driver has stopped, arm signals may be given in the usual manner, the vehicle's headlights providing illumination.

Manual Operation of Traffic Control Devices:

In special circumstances officers may be required to direct traffic through the manual operation of traffic control signals. This type of activity may be authorized by the traffic engineer or a supervisor in response to some special event or emergency. If such traffic control methods are authorized, the authorizing supervisor will ensure assigned personnel have adequate training to operate the traffic signal manually.

Temporary Traffic Control Devices:

1. The shift supervisor may designate the use of temporary traffic control devices in conjunction with a traffic emergency. The shift supervisor will be responsible for arranging the positioning and removal of the temporary device with the assistance of traffic engineering if needed. The Traffic Engineering Department can provide barricades, cones, directional arrows information signs etc., as needed in the locations designated by the shift supervisor.
2. The shift supervisor may also designate locations requiring a temporary traffic control device in response to some special event.

Traffic Control at the Scene of Accidents:

Upon responding to the scene of an accident, it may become necessary to implement methods of traffic direction and control in order to protect the scene of the investigation, minimize the occurrence of secondary traffic accidents caused by the congestion of traffic near the primary accident scene, and to minimize the inconvenience to unrelated vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The use of patrol vehicles with emergency lights, traffic cones, barricades, flares, and other signaling devices are appropriate in the control of traffic at accident scenes. Traffic direction and control at the scene of accidents shall be done in accordance with Department policy regarding Traffic Accident Investigations.

Traffic Direction at Special Events:

The procedure for handling traffic direction and control at special events is covered in the Special Events Policy, Number 95-31.

Traffic Control at Fire Scenes:

There are times when officers will be needed for traffic control at fire scenes. This may occur when:

1. The Fire Department official in charge of the scene requests traffic be diverted for fire department operational considerations;
2. The officer on the scene decides traffic should be diverted for the public safety or to prevent interference with fire control efforts.

When requested by a fire official in charge, the officer will provide the direction as requested. An on duty shift supervisor may respond to assess the situation. Upon arrival, the shift supervisor may assign units to provide the necessary level of traffic control.

Traffic Control During Periods of Adverse Road or Weather Conditions:

Officers may be utilized to provide traffic direction and control when, due to temporary or localized conditions of the roadway or inclement weather, additional hazards to vehicular traffic exist that warrants additional precautions or diversions from hazardous areas. Roadway damage, flooding, roadway icing, excessive snowfall, and other similar conditions may require the use of officers to control traffic on affected roadways. During such circumstances, officers will use caution in selecting appropriate locations and methods of controlling traffic in order to provide adequate warning to affected traffic in order to prevent unsafe conditions for the officer and the vehicular traffic.

Reflective Safety Vests:

In order to accord the maximum degree of safety possible at traffic scenes or other situations that require high visibility to be safe, it is the policy of this Department to supply safety vests to all Commissioned Personnel and Community Service Officers. These vests will be worn while any of the above listed members of this

Department are at a traffic accident or other incident that is still in the roadway. Safety vests will be worn in any situation such as traffic control, road blocks or any other roadway situation that requires high visibility. This policy does not restrict officers from wearing the vest any time they feel it would be an asset to their safety.

Non-Sworn Traffic Direction Personnel:

Community Service Officers shall perform traffic direction and control activities as part of their support role to patrol officers and will conform to the aforementioned procedures.

Applicants for the job of Community Service Officer are screened, tested, and selected on the basis of certain physical and mental aptitudes which are consistent with the skills required to perform manual traffic direction and control functions.

The Department provides on-the-job training in manual traffic direction and control prior to assignment to those duties.

Community Service Officers must wear the full uniform prescribed by the Department policies when performing manual traffic direction and control activities.